

*Ryan*

November 3, 1958

Dear Francis:

Thank you for your cordial note of the 30th. The main fuss here seems to be over now, thank goodness, and I can think of getting back to my own work. I don't have to tell you what an astonishment it was, and I might still find it difficult to believe if I did not remind myself that I was probably exaggerating the importance of the award. Nevertheless, it is both a gratification and an anomaly to be coupled with Beadle & Tatum: they should have been honored manyfold over a decade ago, if such honors are to be taken seriously at all.

I respect your admonition about becoming an administrator, though it is not easy to know exactly what to do about it. Aside from the substantial 'administration' involved in just running any kind of laboratory, how refractory should one be about other obligations? Probably my most serious external distraction now is working on the NIH Genetics study section, and perhaps I should consider dropping even that, though I would hate to at this early stage of its growth. I have to spend quite a lot of time just now, of course, in preparing to move to Stanford, what with building plans and grant applications, but the worst of that seems to be just over. My move to Stanford was predicated entirely on my personal research functions, but this ought to fit into a departmental program which relates closely to it, especially in the genetics of tissue cells. If this can be financed in a reasonably straightforward way, with the help of various applications that have already been drawn up, I do not expect this to constitute a serious drain in the future. My hopes for this are based (1) on the homogeneity of interests and relatively small size of the departmental program, and (2) Arthur Kornberg's remarkable example. Art seems to be able to run quite a good sized, and much more diversified department with heavy teaching responsibilities-- and still spend most of his time in the laboratory. His technique here, as well as in DNA chemistry, is something I hope to learn more about from him on the spot. Our department teaching load will be negligible and I expect to be spared any measurable responsibility for routine committee work and the like.

What I have regretted during the past two or three years has been the vanishing time for contemplation and reading: I used to be such a voracious student of all sorts of things outside my immediate specialty, and I miss the excitement of it. One of my optimisms for Stanford is a far more convenient and usable library set up.

It is impossible to be certain how things will go, Parkinson's law notwithstanding. But, looking at it somewhat cynically, if the Nobel fuss has any long term value at all it may be to reinforce my own determination and judgment how best to serve.

Best to Betty,